

Message Text

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16

ACTION COME-00

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R 200630Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9321

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

UNCLAS JIDDA 6813

E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTRA, BEXP

SUBJ: PRIVATE TRADE MISSION

REF : A. KUWAIT 4841; B. JIDDA 4736; C. JIDDA 4888

1. WHILE SAG OFFICIALS HAVE NOT YET COMPLAINED, IT IS CLEAR THEY ARE BECOMING BEMUSED BY UNFOCUSSED NATURE OF VISITS. PRIVATE SAUDI BUSINESSMEN HAVE COMPLAINED BITTERLY THAT VISITS ARE TOO SHORT TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING OR EVEN TO MEET WITH A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLING OF THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

2. OF EQUAL CONCERN TO US IS THE PATTERN DEVELOPING IN THE PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF THESE MISSIONS, WHICH FREQUENTLY CONSISTS OF AN "ADVANCE MAN" WHO ZIPS THROUGH A MONTH OR SO IN ADVANCE, TALKS TO A FEW LOCAL OFFICIALS AND BUSINESSMEN IN GENERAL TERMS, AND DEPARTS EXPECTING THE EMBASSY TO TAKE CARE OF ALL THE "DETAILS" FROM MAKING APPOINTMENTS AND SOCIAL EVENTS TO ARRANGING BAGGAGE HANDLING. WHILE WE ARE PLEASED TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO PROVIDE AUXILLIARY SUPPORT FOR THESE PRIVATE MISSIONS, THE EMBASSY'S RESOURCES ARE TOO LIMITED TO ASSUME FULL MANAGEMENT FOR THEM. THE PROBLEM IS INTENSIFIED BY THE FACT THAT IT IS NEVER CLEAR JUST WHAT THE MISSION ORGANIZERS

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HAVE LEFT UNDONE UNTIL THE LAST-MINUTE STREAM OF URGENT

CABLES COMES POURING IN. AS A FINAL TOUCH, THESE "TOP-LEVEL PRESTIGIOUSGROUPS" FIND IT DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE THEIR ADVANCE MEN RETURN ABOUT 3 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF MISSIONS TO FINALIZE ARRANGMENTS DIRECTLY.

3. WE WOULD ENCOURAGE IN THE FUTURE ADVANCE MEN OR MISSIONS TO THIS AREA TO HIRE A REPUTABLE MISSION ORGANIZER AND ADMINISTRATOR IN COUNTRY, AT LEAST UNTIL WE ARE ABLE TO BUILD UP OUR CURRENT STAFF.

4. NONE OF THIS IS MEANT TO DISCOURAGE VISITORS OR MISSIONS; WE REALIZE THEIR VALUE ANDIMPORTANCE. BUT ENCOURAGING MISSION ORGANIZERS (PARTICULARLY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE ONES) TO HIRE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS WOULD BE A BIG STEP TO LIBERATING OUR SINGLE COMMERCIAL OFFICER (AND TWO OTHER OFFICERS IN ECON/COMMERCIAL SECTION) FOR THE BACKLOG OF REPORTING AND OTHER DUTIES THAT WE HAVE HAD TO NEGLECT FOR MISSIONS.
AKINS

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